Daily Update – June 16, 2020

Briefing with Dr. Henry

In today’s daily briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, reported 11 new cases of COVID-19 in B.C., bringing the total number of cases to 2,756 since the pandemic began. Of those, 940 have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. There are 172 active cases of COVID-19 in the province and 2,460 people who tested positive have recovered. The number of people in hospitals throughout B.C. is 11, including five people in critical care. Five long-term care facilities continue to have active outbreaks in B.C.

Child care support

The temporary emergency funding program (TEF) for licensed child care centres is being extended until Aug. 31, 2020, announced the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development. The funding is a key part of the province’s COVID-19 response, as it helps to ensure essential-service workers have access to safe, reliable child care and parents can return to work as the economy restarts and more B.C. businesses open. It also ensures that child care centres are holding spots, free of charge, for their existing families who may choose to stay home with their children through the summer. Communicating this timeline well in advance will allow child care providers, as well as parents, sufficient time to plan their next steps. The funding supports open centres to operate with reduced enrolment and helps those that are temporarily closed to cover fixed costs, like rent or lease payments. In addition, the province will require operators to use any surplus TEF — after meeting funding and health guidelines — to provide their early childhood educators (ECEs) with temporary wage enhancements or other compensation, such as training or benefits.

CERB extended

Earlier today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced an eight-week extension to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). CERB has provided taxable payments of $2,000 for up to four months to Canadians who lost income because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today's announcement means the financial supports will be extended for eight weeks for those who still can't work as provinces and territories gradually reopen their economies.

Border closure extended

The prime minister also extended the Canada-U.S. border closure by another 30 days, keeping it in place until late July. An agreement has once again been reached between Canada and the United States to keep the border closed to all non-essential or “discretionary” travel for another month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced. The extension on the existing agreement means the border restrictions will stay in place until July 21. It allows the flow of trade and commerce, as well as temporary foreign workers and essential workers who live and work on opposite sides of the border. Tourists and cross-
border visits remain prohibited. This is the third time the agreement has been extended, after first being imposed in March, with the current extension on border restrictions set to expire June 21.

Testing

Anyone in the VCH region with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, however mild, can now be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test. Contact your physician or nurse practitioner’s office, or a local community collection centre to arrange for a test. Phone numbers and locations of collection centre can be found by visiting: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing or by calling 8-1-1. In Vancouver, the City Centre and REACH urgent and primary care centres can provide testing as well as the St. Vincent’s drive-up location at 4875 Heather Street. The Richmond Assessment Centre is located at 6820 Gilbert Road, in the parking lot of the Richmond Tennis Club. On the North Shore, testing is available at the North Vancouver Urgent and Primary Care Centre. If you think you need testing, please call ahead before visiting your doctor, urgent and primary care center or health clinic.

VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. For more information on COVID-19, please visit www.vch.ca/COVID19.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: http://www.bccdc.ca/.